

**Winter
2017-2018
Newsletter**

**Conway Historical
Society
100 Main St.
P.O. Box 1949
Conway NH. 03818
Phone: 603-447-5551**

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A publication of
the Conway
Historical Society

Welcome Winter

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Supporters of the CHS,

Happy New Year!

In thinking about this last year, and looking forward to the new, I am struck by how busy we have been and how many different avenues we are travelling. Your Board has been moving forward on a number of different fronts, and all, I believe, in the right direction.

For one, we have decided to really focus on cleaning out the Eastman Lord House of unwanted/unneeded items that are not of relevance to Conway. We have agreed with Bob, our part-time curator, to a de-accessioning policy, and are moving forward on this project, albeit slowly. This is in preparation for a significant upgrade to the security and fire alarms system that was required by our last inspection. Pope Security will be making the improvements in the near future and they need to be able to get around the building easily. We also have some other construction projects to contend with so making space now will help us in the end. Brian Wiggin has offered to be in charge of reducing our collection of books and magazines appropriately as many items are already catalogued at our library. All-in-all this work will result in a better presentation of our collections and period rooms.

With Members input at the last two meetings in November and December we decided to cancel member meetings in January, February and March, resuming our normal schedule in April. With low participation in the depth of winter, and snowy and icy conditions the norm, folks preferred to not risk slipping and falling during this time of year.

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UPCOMING CHS MEETINGS

The Board of Directors with significant input from the membership, has agreed to cancel the member programs for January, February, and March, due to the rigors of winter weather. Our next members' meeting and potluck dinner will take place April 10, 2018.

**Save the dates—
Conway Historical Society monthly
program is the
second Tuesday of each month**

****Potluck dinner** begins at 6pm with regular CHS meetings and presentations at 7pm. All CHS programs are open to the public in the lower level of the Salyards Center for the Arts.

The snow date for each program is the following Tuesday, same time and place!

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As you all know, the Robert Frost Charter School has leased the upper level of the Salyards through August of this year. Their Board has recently approached CHS about potentially leasing the lower level also, and extending their lease period. There are many concerns to deal with under this proposed arrangement, from their side and ours, so your Board is not taking this request lightly. We have already had a number of meetings discussing the options, and at this time there appears to be a few stumbling blocks, but none that cannot be overcome. So, as this situation develops we will keep our membership informed.

And it is with regret we announce that Lenny and Norma Whitmore are leaving the area to move closer to their children. Lenny and Norma have contributed 'many hours' of work on our gardens, in the office, and on our hospitality committee. Lenny has also been our contact with the Mountain Garden Club and all that they have done to help us out over the years. Their input and support will be sorely missed.

So, looking forward, we find ourselves needing two or three new Board members to fill our roster. If you are interested in stepping forward we would love to have you attend the board meetings and give your input! And if serving on the Board is not your thing, we can certainly use your help in marking and identifying some of our artifacts for either storage or de-accessioning. If nothing else, there will be a flurry of activity around the ELH this summer!

Sincerely,
Ken Rancourt

At the November members' meeting, Mike Tamulis spoke about the evolution of paint and wallpaper. He demonstrated the use of some of the older wallpaper utensils. He spoke about the different paints used and the dangers of their usage. Above and below are some of the utensils he brought.



CRAWFORD NOTCH

By Brian Wiggin

My grandparents, Marguerite and Wellman "Slim" Rowell, lived in the Willey House Railroad Station for many years while I was growing up. Grampa Slim, before he married my grandmother, had also been the agent at Mt. Willard.

These were lonely times for him being isolated for weeks at a time with the only contact being engineers waving as they passed the station.

He resorted to the bottle to overcome his isolation. Despite this, when he met Gram, it was a match made in heaven. They treasured their union and these were the happiest times of their lives.

Naturally they welcomed family and friends and I spent many vacations up there with friends such as Marshall Allard and Ronnie Littlefield, along with my "sisters" Janet Bragg, and Linda, Maureen and Elaine Wiggin. Those times are among our fondest. There was no electricity - just gas lamps; cooking and common needs were met in trying ways, but that was part of the fun. Frequently the telephone would also be out of commission so the only other voices heard were over the Maine Central lines. Grampa Slim was in charge of maintaining these rails in some of the roughest weather in the Northeast. His weather-beaten face showed it. The stretch involved the tracks between the very top of the Notch at the Crawford House down to Madame Morey's at the Inn Unique. She was the representative for the Town every three sessions. She and Gram were among the seven voters and they were Republicans while Grampa was a Democrat. During this time they stayed up until midnight to be the first to have their votes counted nationally every presidential election. They remained married despite the difference in party registration. Each held several Town offices for which they received \$100 each.

The tracks were so close to the house, that during the winter the two would jump out of their window seat chairs upon seeing the plow, in case the snow decided to go through the windows and land on the living room floor.

Perhaps the scariest spot for Grampa Slim was the Frankenstein Trestle. Of course, we thought it was named for the movie monster but it wasn't.

Frequently Grampa had to crawl on hands and knees to cross it as the severe winds would have blown him off. Frankenstein actually was a young German artist who spent time with Samuel A Bemis, the original owner of the Inn Unique. Godfrey N. Frankenstein was the second son of a German professor.

According to a story written by Madame Morey in Appalachia in 1948, he was born in 1820 and decided early to devote his life to painting. He labored in both Cincinnati and Philly. By the time he was twenty, he

CRAWFORD NOTCH continued

became a landscape painter. He took an early interest in Niagara Falls. His first visit to the White Mountains was in 1847, it is believed. Dr. Bemis named it for his friend, and Frankenstein told him, "I am much obliged to you for the compliment." Both the Cliff and later the trestle were thus named. Between 1856 and 1873, Godfrey and Marie Frankenstein stayed three times at the home of Dr. Bemis. However, the first of Dr. Frankenstein's visits must have been before 1847 when the railroad survey was completed, or the names would not have stuck. We do know that there is a picture by Godfrey of the cliff and of the view up Dry River just after the iron was laid. These were made into lithographs and used by the railroad to advertise for our earliest tourists.

Sadly most of the prints had been stored in the attic of Union Station in Portland and later dumped into the harbor. Frankenstein, with failing eyesight, died just two years after his last visit with his sister in 1871. However, we still have the architectural wonder and cliff to remember him by and the Historical Society has much Bemis information.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian P. Wiggin



Thank you to Life Members Dan and Judy Kennedy. They recently donated three heavy duty shelving units for our furniture collection, as well as four heavy duty clothing racks to supplement and replace the light-weight ones we are currently using. These will make our collections more secure and accessible. Again, many thanks to them for their donations.

Officers and Directors

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447-2720

Vice President – **Brian Wiggin**
447-3426

Secretary – **Jane Rancourt**
447-2720

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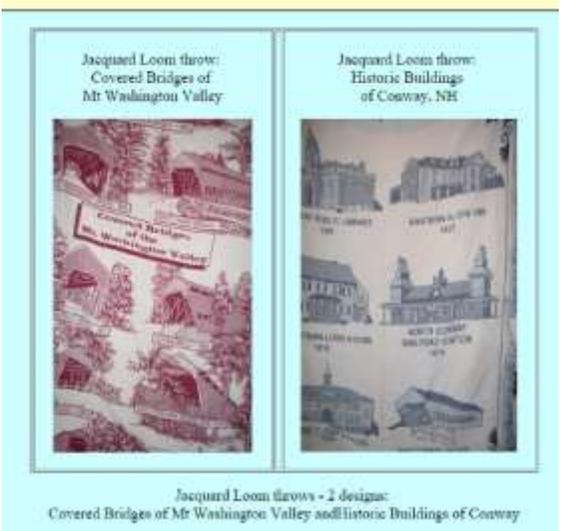
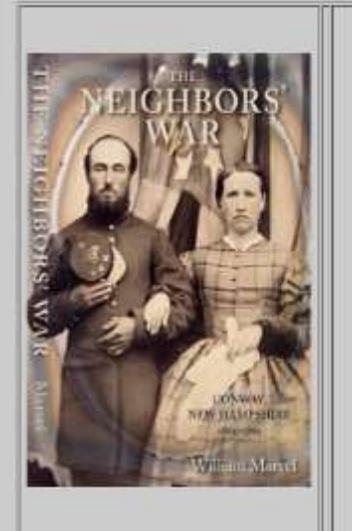
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Conway Historical Society
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PO Box 1949
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CHS Newsletter

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A significant percentage of our income is generated through membership.
Please pass your newsletter along to a friend when you are finished with it. Recycle and help the society to grow.
Membership Dues are payable in October and run through December of the following year.

**Conway Historical
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Conway NH. 03818
Phone: 603-447-5551

CHS Membership Dues = \$20.00 per person per year

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